

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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C O R R E C T E D P A R A F I V E

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, UY

SUBJ: BORDABERRY REJECTS REQUEST FOR RENEWED
PARTY ACTIVITY

REF: MONTEVIDEO 2493

-. SUMMARY: IN A TV ADDRESS TO THE NATION ON
SEPT 4, PRESIDENT BORDABERRY, DRAMATICALLY
BACKED BY THE CABINET, MILITARY CINCS AND OTHER GOU
OFFICIALS, REJECTED THE RECENT REQUEST FOR THE REMOVAL
OF CONSTRAINTS ON POLITICAL PARTY ACTIVITY (REFTEL)
AND FURTHER OUTLINED ADMINISTRATION THINKING ON THE
POLITICAL-INSTITUTIONAL DIRECTION OF THE NATION.
HIS MAIN POINTS WERE THAT FUTURE POLITICAL PARTY
ACTIVITY WOULD BE "CHANNELED" AND THAT 1976 ELECTIONS
UNDER OLD NORMS WERE "INCONCEIVABLE". ALTHOUGH
REASSURING TO THE MILITARY IN THAT HE COMMITTED HIMSELF
TO SEE THROUGH TO A CONCLUSION THE HISTORIC PROCESS
ON WHICH THEY AND HE HAVE EMBARKED TOGETHER, AS WELL
AS TO OTHERS WHO SUPPORT THIS PROCESS, THE SPEECH HAD
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TO BE PROFOUNDLY DISAPPOINTING TO POLITICIANS AND

PARTIES WHOSE HOPES FOR RESUSCITATION HAVE BEEN DASHED.

2. PRESIDENT BORDABERRY, ON SEPTEMBER 4, RESPONDED TO A RECENT OPEN LETTER SIGNED BY 108 PROMINENT POLITICAL FIGURES REQUESTING RENEWAL OF PARTY ACTIVITIES WHICH COULD, INTER ALIA, LET THE PARTIES PARTICIPATE IN CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM. ALTHOUGH THE PRESIDENT CHOSE TO DESCRIBE HIS REMARKS AS LAYING OUT THE NATION'S POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FUTURE, RATHER THAN BEING A SIMPLE REPLY TO THE POLITICIANS' DECLARATION, HIS MESSAGE CARRIED AN UNEQUIVOCAL REJECTION OF BOTH PARTIES AND POLITICIANS IN THE TRADITIONAL MOLD.

3. EXPANDING ON THE POLICY LINES DESCRIBED IN HIS JUNE 27 SPEECH (MVD 1813) AND IN FONMIN BLANCO'S CONSTITUTION DAY ADDRESS ON JULY 18 (A-115), THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT RECENT HISTORY HAD SHOWN THAT THE PARTIES DID NOT REPRESENT THE DESIRES OF THE PEOPLE WITH RESPECT TO CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM. IN FACT, HE SAID, THE PARTIES WASTED EIGHT YEARS (1958-66) IN "STERILE DEBATE" ON THE SUBJECT AND, AFTER TWO OUTRIGHT REJECTIONS BY THE PEOPLE, FINALLY CAME UP WITH A CONSTITUTION THAT STILL FAILED TO BRING ABOUT THE PROFOUND REFORMS WHICH URUGUAYANS DESIRED. THE PARTY SYSTEM WHICH FUNCTIONED UNTIL JUNE 27, 1973, NOT ONLY FAILED TO RESOLVE NATIONAL PROBLEMS BUT ALSO FAILED TO FORM A SENSE OF NATIONAL UNITY. THE RESULT OF THIS "PROSTITUTED POLITICAL SYSTEM" WAS A DETERIORATING NATION AND FINALLY OPEN SEDITION. BORDABERRY ASKED, "IS THIS YOUR CONCEPT OF REPRESENTATION? AND IS IT THAT TO WHICH THEY WISH TO RETURN IN THE NAME OF POPULAR REPRESENTATION?"

4. REFERRING TO THE PRESENT PROCESS AS A REVOLUTION, BORDABERRY STATED THAT THERE IS AN EMBRYONIC INSTITUTIONAL REFORM IN PROCESS WHICH IS NOT YET READY TO BE CONSOLIDATED IN A CONSTITUTION. HOWEVER, THERE WILL BE A CONSTITUTION TO "CREATE AN AUTHENTIC AND MILITANT DEMOCRACY AND AN EFFICIENT STATE AT THE SERVICE OF THE NATIONAL GOOD." THE NEW CONSTITUTION WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE PEOPLE WHO WILL SAY HOW THE CONTINUITY OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RESTORATION IS TO BE ASSURED, THE PRESIDENT SAID, BUT HE DID NOT SAY WHEN.

5. ON THE SUBJECT OF ELECTIONS THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT IT IS INCONCEIVABLE THAT, IN NOVEMBER 1976, ELECTIONS COULD BE CONVOKED UNDER THE POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM CAST ASIDE ON JUNE 27, 1973. HE ADDED, IN EFFECT, THAT THOSE WHO THINK OTHERWISE "THIS

NIGHT, LOSE ALL HOPE."

6. WITH RESPECT TO FUTURE PARTY ACTIVITY, THE PRESIDENT STATED, "PARTY CURRENTS WILL HAVE TO BE CHanneLED IN THE FUTURE SO AS TO IMPEDE REPETITION OF THE POLITICAL DEFECTION WHICH JUSTIFIED THE ACTION OF THE ARMED FORCES AS THE LAST SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT." PERFECTING A SYSTEM TO ENSURE POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC LIFE WITHOUT THE POLITICAL ABUSES OF THE PAST WILL BE THE REVOLUTION'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE PEOPLE, HE SAID.

7. COMMENT: AT THE END OF HIS SPEECH, WHICH SOME SEE AS AN OVER-REACTION TO THE POLITICIANS' LETTER, THE PRESIDENT SAID HIS COURSE WAS UNSWERVING. IN ACT, HIS COMMENTS DID FOLLOW THE DIRECTION LAID OUT PREVIOUSLY IN PUBLIC UTTERANCES BY HIM AND OTHER ADMINISTRATION SPOKESMEN. NEVERTHELESS, ITS IMPACT WILL BE GREAT. FIRST, IT WAS CLEARLY INTENDED TO DASH THE PARTIES' AND POLITICIANS' HOPES FOR A RETURN TO THE SYSTEM THEY KNEW. SECOND, IT ASSURES THE MILITARY THAT THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE REMAINS CONVINCED THAT THE PROCESS ON WHICH THEY AND HE HAVE EMBARKED IS TO BE SEEN THROUGH TO CNCLUSION. THIRD, IT ESTABLISHES A COURSE FOR A REVOLUTIONARY DEPARTURE FROM URUGUAY'S POLITICAL TRADITION.

8. WE DO NOT EXPECT ANY SUDDEN OVERT MOVES BY EITHER THE GOVERNMENT OR THE POLITICIANS AS A RESULT OF THE NEW REALITY. HOWEVER REACTION TO SEPTEMBER 4 IS BOUND TO BUILD. MEDIA COMMENT HAS BEEN NIL AND WE HAVE NOT YET TALKED WITH THE MOST DIRECTLY AFFECTED, THE POLITICAL PARTIES. UNTIL WE DO IT IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT HOW THIS REJECTION AND DISAPPOINTMENT WILL BE EXPRESSED. THEY HAVE A LONG TRADITION IN BOTH DEMOCRATIC LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROCEDURES AND IN THE ART OF COMPROMISE. HOWEVER, THEY HAVE NOT, IN RECENT HISTORY, FACED A FUTURE WHICH AS THE PRESIDENT DESCRIBED IT, CONTAINS NO CLEAR HOPE FOR THEM.

9. BORDABERRY'S FULL SPEECH, REACTIONS THERETO, AND FURTHER ANALYSIS WILL FOLLOW.
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